

REMARKS

The Office Action mailed June 7, 2007, has been carefully reviewed and the foregoing amendment has been made in consequence thereof.

Claims 1-19 are pending in the application. Claims 1-7 are withdrawn from consideration. Claims 8-19 stand rejected.

The rejection of Claims 14-19 under 37 CFR 1.75(a) is respectfully traversed. Claims 14-19 have been amended to consistently recite "a swirler assembly". For at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully request that the objection of Claims 14-19 be withdrawn.

The rejection of Claims 8-19 under 35 U.S.C. §112, first and second paragraphs is respectfully traversed.

Claim 8 has been amended to recite "said swirler assembly welded to said dome assembly." As shown in Figure 3 and described for example at paragraph [0030], the swirler assembly is welded to the dome assembly. Accordingly, Claim 8 is submitted to be in condition for allowance. Claims 9-13 depend from Claim 8.

Similarly, Claim 14 has been amended to recite "said swirler assembly welded to said dome assembly." Claims 15-19 depend from Claim 14.

For at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully request that the Section 112 rejection of Claims 8-19 be withdrawn.

The rejection of Claims 8, 9, 12-15, 18 and 19 under U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Howell et al (U.S. Pat. No. 6,314,739) ("Howell") is respectfully traversed.

Howell describes a brazeless combustor dome assembly. This dome assembly includes a swirler assembly (24), a seal plate (98) and a domeplate (21). The seal plate is positioned inside the domeplate and welded flush against the forward side of the dome plate

(115). Notably, Howell does not describe nor suggest an annular gap defined between the domeplate and the sealplate.

Claim 8 recites a combustor for a gas turbine engine, wherein the combustor comprises “a swirler assembly . . . a dome assembly comprising a sealplate and a domeplate . . . said sealplate comprising an overhang portion and an integrally-formed body . . . said sealplate welded to said domeplate such that an annular gap is defined between said domeplate and said sealplate overhang portion, said swirler assembly welded to said dome assembly.”

Howell does not describe nor suggest a combustor for a gas turbine engine as is recited in Claim 8. Notably Howell does not describe nor suggest a combustor that includes a dome assembly including a sealplate and a domeplate, wherein the sealplate includes an overhang portion and is welded to the domeplate such that an annular gap is defined between the domeplate and the sealplate overhang portion. Rather, in contrast, Howell describes a seal plate that is welded flush against the forward side of the domeplate. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that Claim 8 is patentable over Howell.

Claims 9, 12, and 13 depend directly or indirectly from independent Claim 8. When the recitations of Claims 9, 12, and 13 are considered in combination with the recitation of Claim 8, Applicants respectfully submit that dependent Claims 9, 12 and 13 are also patentable over Howell.

Claim 14 recites a “gas turbine engine comprising a combustor comprising a dome assembly, at least one injector, and a swirler assembly . . . said dome assembly comprising a sealplate and a domeplate . . . said sealplate welded to said domeplate and comprising a body and an overhang portion extending integrally from said body . . . said sealplate welded to said domeplate such that an annular gap is defined between said domeplate and said sealplate overhang portion . . . said swirler assembly welded to said dome assembly....”

Howell does not describe nor suggest a gas turbine engine as recited in Claim 14. Notably Howell does not describe nor suggest a combustor including a dome assembly that

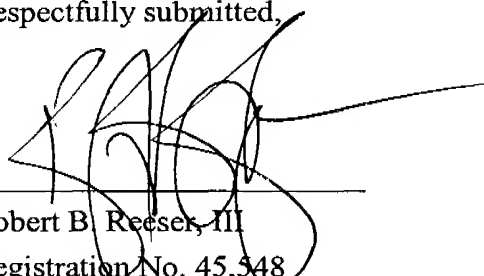
includes a sealplate and a domeplate, wherein the sealplate includes an overhang portion and that is welded to the domeplate such that an annular gap is defined between the domeplate and the sealplate overhang portion. Rather, in contrast, Howell describes a seal plate that is welded flush against the forward side of the domeplate. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that Claim 14 is patentable over Howell.

Claims 15, 18, and 19 depend from independent Claim 14. When the recitations of Claims 15, 18, and 19 are considered in combination with the recitation of Claim 14, Applicants respectfully submit that dependent Claims 15, 18 and 19 are also in condition for allowance.

For at least the reasons set for above, Applicants respectfully request that the Section 102(b) rejection of Claims 8, 9, 12-15, 18 and 19 be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, all the claims now active in this application are believed to be in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and favorable action is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. B. Reeser, III', is written over a horizontal line.

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